

DRUGS

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DRUG TRAFFIC IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

JOHN WINGATE: Tonight, part two in a series, as I talk to man whose book has been seized by the CIA. The man began his story last night, charging that the CIA and the State Department are linked with the traffic of heroin from Southeast Asia to this country. Perhaps even on the streets of New York. I'll ask him tonight, among other things, what Administrations are involved?

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WINGATE: Interview on the CIA, heroin and the State Department in one minute.

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WINGATE: This is the final part of a two part series on the alleged involvement between Washington and the traffic in heroin, smack, skag, out of Southeast Asia. The guest, and you heard the first details from him last night, is Alfred McCoy, twenty six year old graduate student at Yale University. He spent eighteen months researching the book. He spent a number of months in Southeast Asia. He went to Europe. He talked to the French who know Indochina, and suddenly when this book was about to be published by Harpur and Row, the CIA demanded and got the right to have the book. That book is now with the CIA, right Alfred McCoy.

ALFRED MC COY: That's correct.

WINGATE: As we talk in New Haven, tell me how the State Department covered up this drug traffic?

MC COY: The most important area has been in South Vietnam. At every point at which either the media or Congress has come

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forth with allegations about the involvement alleged involvement of high officials of the South Vietnamese Government in the distribution of either opium over the years, and now the sale of heroin, to GI's, American GI's, serving in South Vietnam, the State Department has come forth consistently with categorical, usually inaccurate denials. For example, in 1968, Senator Albert Gruening, the Senator from Alaska, charged, on the basis of information that he received, that Prime Minister, and at that point Vice President Ky, had been involved in opium smuggling between Laos and South Vietnam in the early 1960's, at a time when he was working in a covert operation with the Central Intelligence Agency. The State Department issued a categorical denial at the time. Absolutely denying that that was in any way true. In the course of my research, I interviewed a number of Vietnamese intelligence agents, a number of former high ranking officials in the Vietnamese Air Force, including one past Commander of the Air Force, and they essentially confirmed those charges, and elaborated on them in great detail.

WINGATE: But why would they want to confirm these charges to you?

MC COY: That's a very difficult question. That's one thing I keep asking myself. I went and did interviews with people. I established good relations with them. I usually did interviews--I didn't simply come in and interview them for a matter of minutes. I usually spent several days. We got to know each other. We became friends. When it came around to telling me confidential information, they felt they didn't-- They saw no reason to hold back. And they simply told me what they knew to be true. I think human beings fundamentally, if you give them a chance, have a certain kind of respect for the truth.

WINGATE: Alfred McCoy, were these people who had become sickened of the Thieu Regime, and wanted to back knife. That is to say, dissidents?

MC COY; It's a possibility in that almost everybody in South Vietnam except the American Embassy and the members of the Administration themselves are enormously dissatisfied with the government. It's very very difficult to find anybody in South Vietnam who likes the Thieu Regime. It's almost a given that anybody you're going to interview, except ongoing current officials, are going to be opponents in some way, shape or form. And that's why I always thought it was incumbent on me to try and punch holes in my sources' arguments, to try and get corroboration, to look for inconsistencies.

WINGATE: If I on this station had the money and were able to say, "Look. Take me there and prove it," could you prove beyond reasonable doubt, what you are saying in the book?

MC COY: What's happened, for example, take the case of a British Television Company that I worked with three months ago. I did a lengthy two hour interview, and I said, "Okay. Now we're going to send a crew to Southeast Asia to confirm and deny what you're saying. Give me your sources." I gave them a lengthy list of my sources. They sent a camera crew out there. They found out far more than I knew, in certain cases. They got people who went on camera, former American employees, high ranking government officials in the regions, who admitted they are involved in the traffic. That will be broadcast on July 31 in Great Britain. Hopefully it will be purchased by American television and shown here. Yes I believe that. I had that experience.

WINGATE: Is part of the proof of your story not in the fact that the CIA went to your publisher to get the book and now has the book?

MC COY: I think the CIA's nervousness is confirmation on what I'm saying is absolutely true.

WINGATE: Is the book going to be published?

MC COY: I hope so. What that really comes down to, I'm convinced. I did my interviews, I got my information, I made my analysis. I'm convinced what I'm saying is true. Everybody I've talked to off the record in government, Seymour Hersch's revelations in THE NEW YORK TIMES back up my case, you know. Based on that experience, and based on my confidence, I'm not in a mood to change much of what I have written. If Harpur and Row insists that I make changes which I am unwilling to make, simply because I know that what I have written is correct, then I'm afraid that Harpur and Row and I will have to part company.

WINGATE: Now we must repeat what we went through yesterday. Seymour Hersch has said in the Times that there has been a high cabinet level government report, a sequel to your book, saying many of the same things you say, and that that government report has been suppressed. How much do you know about that government report?

MC COY: I don't know too much about the suppression of that report. When that committee went off to Southeast Asia, I heard about it. And I was told that their findings, in general, that the fact that they discovered corruption, endemic corruption, on the part of the prime South Vietnamese Government, were going to make narcotics enforcement in the area absolutely impossible.

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It was on the basis that when I heard about that I think in March, that I maintained a pessimistic tone in my book, toward the possibility of a clean up, given the present political circumstances and the present political priorities in Southeast Asia. I tried to get a copy myself, and failed. I have nothing but the most profound admiration for Hersch's ability to get a copy of that document.

WINGATE: To your knowledge, under how many different political Administrations has this gone on in Washington? I presume from what you say, both Democratic and Republican.

MC COY: That's right. It's basically I'd say a bi-partisan win the war policy. As long as there's an Administration in Washington, D. C., whether it be Democrat or Republican, committed to military victory in Indochina, that means that that Administration will have to ally itself to conservative, corrupt, right wing governments in Southeast Asia. In Southeast Asia narcotics trafficking is the most important part of corruption. The United States has recognized the fact that these governments draw a good deal of their financial reserve, both personal and collective from this kind of corrupt activity, and therefore, have never been willing to interfere with it. So the narcotics traffic was in the region, and the U.S. Government did absolutely nothing about it. When it began to affect the U.S. GI's serving in South Vietnam, and then recently narcotics in Southeast Asia began flooding into this country, U.S. officials found themselves bound to, tied to corrupt local governments, corrupt local officials and political factions, who have are involved in the traffic, and found that they had no political leverage to do anything about it. In other words, as long as we remain in Indochina, we're going to be dependent on these corrupt local officials, and as long as we are dependent on them, it's going to be very very unlikely, I feel, to be able to do anything about traffic there.

WINGATE: That's Alfred McCoy, Yale University graduate student, whose book, now in the hands of the CIA, at the request of the CIA, may or may not be published. Thank you for talking.

MC COY: Thank you very much sir.